



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Central Area

2014

Jasper Redevelopment Commission
Tax Increment Financing Allocation Area
November 4, 2014

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Section I Geographic Area

This plan is prepared in accordance with IC 36-7-14-41 to promote economic development on the property shown on the map labeled “Attachment 1.” This area encompasses the downtown area and related industrial and commercial areas. Upon its final adoption, this Development Plan shall be in full force and effect and shall be recorded with the Dubois County Recorder.

Section II Mission & Objectives

The Jasper Redevelopment Commission mission is comprised of three components:

- Enhance the economic health and vitality of Jasper
- Provide the environment for business and industry growth, expansion and attraction
- Increase the city’s tax base

Central to the achievement of the overarching mission are the following objectives:

- Collaboration and facilitation - the Jasper Redevelopment Commission may take an active lead, be a partner or be a participant with other agencies and entities to implement the goals and objectives of the City of Jasper and the Jasper Redevelopment Commission
- Maintain and enhance community assets that attract visitors, residents, business, industry and workforce
- Maintain a vibrant, active, attractive downtown
- Provide the full range of high-quality infrastructure elements necessary to support business and industry growth, retention and attraction
- Continue to provide attractive parks and open space and a wide variety of recreational opportunities
- Grow tourism and sports tourism
- Integrate arts throughout the City of Jasper
- Grow amateur sports

In addition to the goals and objectives identified above, the plan is specifically designed to provide financing for transportation, sewer, storm water, water supply, parking improvements, property acquisition, downtown improvements, and funding for future economic development projects as defined in I. C. 36-7-14-12.2(a) (22) and I.C. 36-7-11.9-3 to foster the goals and objectives of the Area to promote the full potential of the economic development area.



Section III Downtown Jasper

Jasper has long recognized the important role that the downtown plays in the overall economic health of the community. A number of goals of the Comprehensive Plan specifically identify the Downtown area as critical to the strength and vibrancy of the city.

The City of Jasper undertook the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan in 2013. From that extensive planning effort and community input a number of projects were identified to implement to strengthen and revitalize the Downtown:

1. COURTHOUSE SQUARE
 - a. Strengthening the Character of the City's Icon
2. ENHANCING THE CITY'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER
 - a. Building a Critical Mass around Recent Investments
3. REUSE OF THE FORMER INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES
 - a. Capitalizing on Jasper's Industrial Heritage
4. DOWNTOWN CONNECTIVITY
 - a. The Complete Street
5. INTEGRATING ART IN THE PUBLIC REALM
 - a. Advancing Jasper as a place of History,
 - b. Tradition and Innovation

Despite all of these planning efforts and improvement projects, the downtown continues to face challenges. Downtown retail faces increasing competition from concentrated retail developments in other areas of the city. The infrastructure downtown is aging, and public attitude over the past several decades has been the perception that parking is inadequate.

City and economic development officials know that a healthy, vibrant downtown is vital to the city's ability to attract new economic growth in other parts of the community. Officials of companies located in Jasper have reported that the attractiveness of Downtown was an important factor in their decision to invest in Jasper. A successful downtown also offers shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities for residents, and is important in employee recruitment. Continued improvements will help the community attract new businesses, and allow existing businesses to grow.



Section IV Plan for Economic Growth

Downtown Jasper is the vibrant and attractive heart of the community. Throughout this planning process for the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown was mentioned as a strong asset by both the Steering Committee and residents who attended the public workshops. Because Jasper is the county seat, the Dubois County Courthouse serves as the central anchor to the courthouse square. Surrounding the courthouse as well as the immediate blocks along Sixth and Main Streets is a vibrant collection of local businesses. Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan examines the various issues and opportunities in the downtown, and establishes *Goals* and *Objectives* that will enhance the vitality and character of the City Center.

Goal 1: Support and Promote Initiatives to Retain Existing Businesses

1 Develop Appropriate Zoning Designations

Create a Downtown or Downtown Mixed-Use zoning district or overlay to support a mix of land uses and varied density which allows for flexibility and promotes infill and mixed-use development.

2 Prioritize Infrastructure Improvements

Inventory and prioritize downtown infrastructure improvements in a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Coordinate with INDOT officials for such improvements along the U.S. 231 corridor.

3 Ensure Adequate and Appropriate Downtown Parking

Conduct an inventory and analysis of parking to determine supply and demand, and identify potential sites for (off-street) public parking during periods of high use. Identify locations/facilities specifically for long term parking for government and business employees, and short term parking options for customers or visitors. This could be accomplished by providing a timed or metered off-street municipally-owned parking lot that would also serve as a source of revenue.

4 Coordinate Various Local Efforts or Initiatives

Encourage coordination and partnerships between local agencies and volunteer organizations to effectively enhance the downtown's vitality and avoid possible duplication of efforts by stakeholders. This could be accomplished through monthly meetings and/or forums spearheaded either by the Greater Downtown Jasper Business Association or similar group.



Goal 2: Promote Redevelopment Opportunities to Attract New Businesses

1 Encourage the Retention and/or Expansion of Public Facilities

Ensure the retention and expansion of government offices and other public facilities (library, post office, government agencies etc.) are accessible and centrally located. Such activities or destinations can also spur additional private development or investment in the surrounding area.

Sample projects such as:

- The Parklands
- Courthouse Square
- Library
- Main Street Promenade
- Make the River an integral part of Downtown
- North River Walk
- Patoka Steps
- Multiuse Trails
- Downtown Parking Facility

2 Redevelop Vacant and Underutilized Sites

Provide incentives or partner with private investors to redevelop underutilized factories such as the Jasper Cabinet building and/or similar sites in the downtown. Such an initiative should also include the City's continued support of ROJAC's efforts to redevelop the Riverfront.

Support innovative ways to spur investment in the City's original "manufacturing district" (13th and Vine Street area), by designating the area's available buildings for redevelopment. It is also important to provide the proper infrastructure and other public services to ensure the ultimate success of new development.

Sample projects such as:

- Redevelopment of Jasper Cabinet
- Redevelopment of Hoosier Desk
- JOFCO-13th & Vine Streets

3 Provide Economic Development Incentives

Develop incentives such as a TIF district or an economic development area for tax abatements to encourage appropriate new businesses to locate in the downtown area.



Goal 3: Encourage and Promote a Variety of Downtown Activities

1 Encourage Downtown Living

Preserve and strengthen traditional single-family residences and neighborhoods within or adjacent to the downtown, and provide additional residential space on the upper floors of downtown commercial buildings.

Sample projects such as:

- JOFCO - support towards tax credits / 13th & Vine Streets

2 Strengthen Downtown as a Community Stage or Destination

Continuously promote year-round festivals, markets, cultural events or youth activities within the downtown.

3 Strengthen Connections Between Downtown Destinations

Continue to partner with ROJAC's initiatives along the Riverfront and implement streetscape enhancements linking the Riverfront to the Courthouse Square. The addition of the *Spirit of Jasper* train, Train Depot, Jasper City Mill and the popular Riverwalk have resulted in a solid foundation on which to promote additional economic development.

Sample projects such as:

- River Road
- Multiuse Trails
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Main Street Promenade
- North River Walk

Goal 4: Strengthen Connections Between Downtown and the Larger Community

1 Strengthen Physical Connections

Evaluate transportation policies to promote a variety of alternative transportation modes and enhance access to the downtown. This could include prioritizing sidewalk and/or streetscape improvements along high-profile corridors to encourage more pedestrian or bicycle traffic. Streetscape enhancements along local streets that connect to the Riverwalk could also create a more pedestrian- friendly setting for residents and tourists alike.

Sample projects such as:

- River Road
- Multiuse Trails
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Main Street Promenade
- North River walk



2 Strengthen Symbolic Connections

It is also important to incorporate or expand proposed wayfinding signage initiatives undertaken by the Dubois County Tourism Commission within Jasper and throughout the county. Appropriate corridors that directly lead to the Downtown should be identified with similar signage. Refer to the *Gateways and Wayfinding Profile* (Pages 56-57 of Comprehensive Plan) for additional information.

3 Evaluate the Effectiveness on the Circulation Network

Re-evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the downtown street network from the standpoint of both motorists and pedestrians. Increased activity and access to the Patoka River has created a subtle shift in traffic patterns, and in the future could result in increased pedestrian traffic. Such an initiative could also consider the feasibility of returning Jackson and Mill Streets from 1-way to 2-way traffic flow. Refer to the *1-way vs. 2-way Streets Profile* on page 45 of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Sample projects such as:

- Traffic Study

Goal 5: Preserve and Enhance Downtown's Historic and Architectural Character

1 Celebrate Public Places

Enhance the streetscape by utilizing the right-of-way (sidewalks and streets) to create a series of public places (trees, outdoor dining, outdoor furniture, etc.). This could include parking lot screening, tree planting, or special pavement delineating pedestrian zones.

Sample projects such as:

- Courthouse Square
- Library
- Main Street Promenade
- Patoka Steps
- Aquatic Center

2 Retain the Downtown's Historic Character

Support efforts to create a local historic district and a historic preservation ordinance. Such an initiative would provide access to funds and/or technical assistance to property owners interested in maintaining or restoring historically- significant buildings.

Sample projects such as:

- Redevelopment of Jasper Cabinet
- Redevelopment of Hoosier Desk
- JOFCO-13th & Vine Streets



3 Support Public Art

Downtown Jasper is an ideal setting to locate or incorporate public art into the streetscape, open space, or as part of the architecture. Such artwork could also become part of a larger branding effort for the Downtown.

4 Maintain the Variety of Architectural Styles

Celebrate the authenticity of Downtown Jasper by encouraging a mix of styles and densities for future infill development. It is important that any future redevelopment is contextual and strengthens the overall fabric of Downtown.

5 Create Distinct Downtown Gateways

Build on the county-wide wayfinding initiative spearheaded by the Dubois County Tourism Commission to create distinctive gateway features for the Downtown. Use gateways, sculpture and other means to “announce” Downtown Jasper to people passing through the area. This could target motorists traveling along U.S. 231, passengers on the *Spirit of Jasper* train, as well as pedestrians walking along the Riverwalk.



Section V Findings

The Redevelopment Commission makes the following findings with regard to the Economic Development Plan for Central Jasper:

1. The plan promotes significant opportunities for gainful employment of Jasper citizens.

The city's current economic development strategy calls for an emphasis on high value-added jobs in information technology (IT), measuring, testing, navigational instruments, specialty food manufacturing and advanced and specialty manufacturing. To help attract companies that will provide these kinds of jobs, Jasper needs a vibrant downtown. The many improvements that have been made are not sufficient to attract and retain downtown businesses and thus create the city center that companies desire when making new investment in a community.

2. The plan for the Central Area cannot be achieved by regulatory process or by the ordinary operation of private enterprise without resort to the powers allowed the Redevelopment Commission because there is a lack of local public improvements in the area.

The Central Area lacks the infrastructure needed to implement the economic development strategy. The combined sanitary and storm sewer system is aging and will need to be improved and rehabilitated. New office uses in the 21st Century require the infrastructure to facilitate use of high-speed communication equipment. Improvements to these and other facilities are needed to ensure a successful downtown, which in turn will help stimulate and retain economic growth in the entire Central Area.

Significant park and recreation improvements have been made in the Downtown, but the Riverfront remains underutilized. A riverfront development plan has been prepared, but available funds for its implementation have not yet been identified.

Jasper has long recognized that "downtown is everybody's neighborhood," but this is a neighborhood in need of economic revitalization. Development in the Central Area has been hampered by the city's inability to fund the needed public improvements.



3. The public health and welfare will be benefited by the accomplishment of the plan for the Central Area.

Implementation of this plan will lead to job creation across a broad spectrum, from low skilled to highly skilled and in a variety of pay scales. These jobs include office, sales, financial and support service jobs in the Downtown itself as well as in the outlying areas that are influenced by a lively downtown. They also include manufacturing, research, and other jobs in the industrial and research areas. These jobs will improve the standard of living in the community and thus will benefit the public health and welfare.

4. The accomplishment of the plan for the Central Area Development area will be a public utility and benefit as measured by the attraction and retention of permanent jobs, an increase in the property tax base, improved diversity of the economic base, increase in tourism and amateur sports tourism and activities.

This plan is aimed specifically at retaining and adding new jobs and diversifying the Jasper economy. The new businesses that will be attracted to the Central Area will invest in new buildings which will increase the property tax base for the city.

This plan is also intended to improve the quality of life, attract athletes, spectators, residents and businesses through quality facilities and activities.

5. The plan for the Central Area Development Area Conforms to other development plans for the unit.

The City of Jasper has an adopted Comprehensive Plan. The portions of that plan that relate to the Central Area are hereby incorporated as part of this plan.

6. The Central Area is an appropriate geographic area to be designated as an Economic Development Area.

A successful downtown is critical to a successful economy. The downtown's influence extends well beyond any defined boundaries of the downtown itself, as its vitality is an important factor in the locational decisions of business enterprises. The capture of tax increments from the new development will enable the city to provide the public improvements necessary to make the downtown a thriving hub of economic activity to benefit the entire community.

7. Identified Projects and Estimated Cost of Redevelopment Activities.

Based on the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown + Riverfront Master Plan and other planning and public input efforts the following projects have been identified as projects for the Central Area:

- Redevelopment of Jasper Cabinet
- Redevelopment of Hoosier Desk
- The Parklands
- Address issues with the river, dam, sediment, and reserve
- Arts Department education & downtown gallery
- JOFCO - support towards tax credits / Vine Street
- Aquatic Center
- River Road
- Courthouse Square
- Library
- Main Street Promenade
- Make the River an integral part of downtown
- North River Walk
- Patoka Steps
- Multiuse Trails
- Downtown Parking Facility
- Fiber build out to city departments
- North Mill Street and/or 47th Street Extension
- Pedestrian Bridge

The estimated costs for the above projects is approximately \$18,000,000. These projects would be completed over a 10 year or longer period.

